

IN THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1. (currently amended) A method comprising:

receiving a telephony call connection request message having a prefix number;
determining a corresponding IP address based on the prefix number;
assigning a label based on the corresponding IP address; and,
tunneling a request that is derived from the telephony call request message
through a network by routing the request with other established connections through
the network based on the label.

2. (original) The method of claim 1 further including:

creating an entry in a routing table containing an IP address and a set of prefix
numbers associated to the IP address, the IP address being assigned to a central office
that handles calls for the set of prefix numbers.

3. (original) The method of claim 2, further including:

transmitting an update message containing the IP address and the set of prefix
numbers.

4. (original) The method of claim 1, where the prefix number is in a format conforming to ITU E.164, representing a set of numbers having a country code portion and a national significance portion.

5. (currently amended) An article comprising a computer readable medium having instructions stored thereon, which when executed, causes:

- receiving a telephony call connection request message having a prefix number;
- determining a corresponding IP address based on the prefix number;
- assigning a label based on the corresponding IP address;
- sending data from other established connections to a network, the data from the other established connections also tagged with the label; and,
- sending a request with the label to the network so that the request can be tunneled through the network with the other established connections that are transported through the network with the label, the request derived from the telephony call connection request message.

6. (original) The article of claim 5, wherein the computer readable medium further having instructions stored thereon, which when executed, causes:

- creating an entry in a routing table containing an IP address and a set of prefix numbers associated to the IP address, the IP address being assigned to a central office that handles calls for the set of prefix numbers.

7. (original) The article of claim 6, wherein the computer readable medium further having instructions stored thereon, which when executed, causes:

transmitting an update message containing the IP address and the set of prefix numbers.

8. (original) The article of claim 5, where the prefix number is in a format conforming to ITU E.164, representing a set of numbers having a country code portion and a national significance portion.

9. (currently amended) An apparatus for transporting data using label switching comprising:

a processor;

a computer readable medium having instructions stored thereon, which when executed, cause the processor to:

receiving a telephony call connection request message having a prefix number;

determining a corresponding IP address based on the prefix number;

assigning a label based on the corresponding IP address;

sending data from other established connections to a network, the data from the other established connections also tagged with the label; and,

sending a request with the label to the network so that the request can be tunneled through the network with the other established connections that are

transported through the network with the label, the request derived from the telephony call connection request message.

10. (original) The apparatus of claim 9, where the computer readable medium further having instructions stored thereon, which when executed, causes the processor to:

create an entry in a routing table containing an IP address and a set of prefix numbers associated to the IP address, the IP address being assigned to a central office that handles calls for the set of prefix numbers.

11. (original) The apparatus of claim 10, where the computer readable medium further having instructions stored thereon, which when executed, causes the processor to:

transmit an update message containing the IP address and the set of prefix numbers.

12. (original) The apparatus of claim 9, where the prefix number is in a format conforming to ITU E.164, representing a set of numbers having a country code portion and a national significance portion.

13. (currently amended) An apparatus, comprising:

means for receiving a telephony call connection request message having a prefix number;

means for determining a corresponding IP address based upon the prefix number;

means for assigning a label based on the corresponding IP address; and,

means for tunneling a request derived from the telephony call connection request message through a network by routing the request with other established connections through the network based on the label.

14. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 13 further comprising means for creating an entry in a routing table containing an IP address and a set of prefix numbers associated to the IP address, the IP address being assigned to a central office that handles calls for the set of prefix numbers.

15. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 14 further comprising means for transmitting an update message containing the IP address and the set of prefix numbers.

16. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 13 further comprising means for representing a set of numbers having a country code portion and a national significance portion when the prefix number is in a format conforming to ITU E.164.

17. (currently amended) A method, comprising:

receiving a telephony call connection request message having a prefix number;

determining a corresponding IP address based upon the prefix number;

assigning an MPLS label based on the corresponding IP address; and,
sending a message having the MPLS label to a network so that a request for the telephony call can be tunneled through the network by being transported along with data from other established connections based upon the MPLS label.

18. (previously presented) The method of claim 17 where the network further comprises an IP service layer and an ATM transport layer.

19. (previously presented) The method of claim 18 where the call connection request message is an SS7 IAM message.

20. (previously presented) The method of claim 18 where the prefix number is an ITU E.164 compatible prefix.

21. (previously presented) The method of claim 17 where the call connection request message is an SS7 IAM message.

22. (previously presented) The method of claim 17 where the prefix number is an ITU E.164 compatible prefix.

23. (currently amended) An apparatus, comprising:

means for receiving a telephony call connection request message having a prefix number;

means for determining a corresponding IP address based upon the prefix number;

means for assigning an MPLS label based on the corresponding IP address; and,

means for sending a telephony message having the MPLS label to a network so that a request for the telephony call can be tunneled through the network by being transported along with data from other established connections based upon said the MPLS label.

24. (previously presented) The method of claim 23 where the network further comprises an IP service layer and an ATM transport layer.

25. (previously presented) The method of claim 24 where the call connection request message is an SS7 IAM message.

26. (previously presented) The method of claim 24 where the prefix number is an ITU E.164 compatible prefix.

27. (previously presented) The method of claim 23 where the call connection request message is an SS7 IAM message.

28. (previously presented) The method of claim 23 where the prefix number is an ITU E.164 compatible prefix.